

AU/AWC/RWP175/97-04

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

# CORE VALUES: FOUNDATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

by

Daniel R. Simmons, Lt Col, USAF

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Curriculum Requirements

Advisor: Col Gail I. Arnott

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 1997

Report Documentation Page		
<b>Report Date</b> 01APR1997	<b>Report Type</b> N/A	<b>Dates Covered (from... to)</b> -
<b>Title and Subtitle</b> Core Values: foundation for the 21st Century	<b>Contract Number</b>	
	<b>Grant Number</b>	
	<b>Program Element Number</b>	
<b>Author(s)</b> Simmons, Daniel R.	<b>Project Number</b>	
	<b>Task Number</b>	
	<b>Work Unit Number</b>	
<b>Performing Organization Name(s) and Address(es)</b> Air War College Maxwell AFB, AI 36112	<b>Performing Organization Report Number</b>	
<b>Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Name(s) and Address(es)</b>	<b>Sponsor/Monitor's Acronym(s)</b>	
	<b>Sponsor/Monitor's Report Number(s)</b>	
<b>Distribution/Availability Statement</b> Approved for public release, distribution unlimited		
<b>Supplementary Notes</b>		
<b>Abstract</b>		
<b>Subject Terms</b>		
<b>Report Classification</b> unclassified	<b>Classification of this page</b> unclassified	
<b>Classification of Abstract</b> unclassified	<b>Limitation of Abstract</b> UU	
<b>Number of Pages</b> 51		

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### *Abstract*

Air Force officer success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will depend on a robust foundation based on Air Force core values. Recent, well-publicized cases of core value failures among USAF officers suggest a crisis in character that threatens leadership effectiveness in the Air Force. To solve this core value deficiency among USAF officers, the Air Force needs to increase its focus on core values in its officer accession schools and professional military education programs. While current USAF initiatives to address the character problem are steps in the right direction, more needs to be done. The Air Force should create a Center for Core Value Development with a charter to build a core values architecture that directs an integrated training and education program across the spectrum of the Air Force. This initiative would offer the best hope for effective officer leadership in the next century.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

On New Year's Day, 1997, the Rose Bowl parade and football game in Pasadena, California included salutes to the United States Air Force, just one of many tributes in a year-long celebration of the USAF's fiftieth birthday. It's a refreshing change to see favorable publicity regarding the Air Force, because recent history has not been kind to the nation's youngest service. Claims of gross negligence in numerous tragic incidents—Fairchild AFB B-52 crash, CT-43 crash in Croatia, US Army Black Hawk helicopter shootdown in Iraq, to name just a few—have overshadowed the overwhelming success the Air Force enjoyed during Operation Desert Storm. It's also a sad irony that the Air Force's greatest publicity event of recent history, the Captain Scott O'Grady rescue, actually involved a major USAF mission failure, e.g. getting shot down, and the real heroes were the Marine Corps rescue team members.

What is wrong with today's Air Force? Is there a fatal flaw or is the Air Force just in a "slump?" And, what is all this uproar over accountability? How can so much be going wrong when the Air Force is allegedly getting the "best and the brightest" of America's youth? Or is it?

Last September, a United States Air Force Academy cadet was arrested for murder. It was the first time in the 40-year history of the Academy that one of its officer

candidates was charged with killing another human being. If this individual had not been caught, would he have developed into an outstanding Air Force leader? Fortunately, we will never know the answer to this question. But this incident, and the USAF's recent negative track record, raise many more questions about the health and well being of the Air Force and the caliber of leadership that will be in charge of the Air Force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The USAF Academy and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) cadets who began their education this past summer will be the first new officers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, graduating as second lieutenants in the summer of the year 2000. In addition, the Officer Training School (OTS) is already producing some of the first captains of the next century. If there is a problem in today's Air Force—with the quality of its officers—now is the time to figure out what that problem is. From there, the Air Force can take corrective action so the USAF leaders of tomorrow will possess “the right stuff.”

The purpose of this paper is to convince current Air Force leadership that future officer success depends on a robust foundation based on Air Force core values. This paper also offers some recommendations for how the Air Force can better instill these core values into its officers and its officer candidates. To accept this thesis regarding the importance of core values to Air Force officers, we need to understand there is a fundamental deficiency in the character attributes of today's new officer candidates. In addition, I contend that the study of core values offers the best possible solution to this potential “crisis of character.” While a review of current Air Force officer accession programs and professional military education does reveal the inclusion of some core value education, the effort has not solved the problem. Even with a recent Chief of Staff-

led initiative to address this character issue, there is still considerable room for improvement. I firmly believe the Air Force could best implement improvements in character growth programs by establishing a center for core value development for all USAF officers and officer candidates. While the Air Force does seem to be going through a difficult time, the current ailment is not fatal and only needs a good dose of core value “medication.” This is good news because an increasingly complicated and uncertain world highlights the importance of having competent young Air Force leaders ready to face the immense challenges of the future.

It would be easy to blame current Air Force woes on today’s crazy, mixed-up world...but this would be inappropriate. Although this current period in Air Force history does seem to be fraught with many challenges—a potentially unstable global environment, downsizing of military forces, shrinking resources, proliferation of technology and weapons of mass destruction, and an information explosion—this type of turbulence is nothing new. In the Air Force’s relatively short history, leaders have successfully handled the transition from propeller airplane to jet aircraft, the advent of the atomic weapon, and the incorporation of stealth and precision-/space-guided weapons, to name just a few of the significant developments. The old adage, “the only thing that remains constant is change,” indicates change is just a normal part of life. In fact, effective leadership manifests itself during these ever-present periods of change.

Burt Nanus, a professor of management and policy sciences at the University of Southern California, sums this thought up by saying, “If one thinks of the great public leaders of history—Moses, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Winston Churchill, etc.—it is immediately obvious that all of them were effective precisely in times of great



change, complexity and uncertainty. In fact, the secret of managing change and complexity is none other than leadership itself.”<sup>1</sup>

If leadership is the key to a better tomorrow in the Air Force, all the USAF needs to do is teach the universally-approved, time-tested keys to successful leadership. Right? Unfortunately, over the years the voluminous literature on the attributes of an effective leader has resulted in one conclusion—there is no conclusion. There seems to be no closure on whether trait, behavior or situation approaches provide the answers to an individual becoming a good or bad leader. In addition, the question of leaders being born or made has been debated extensively, again with no agreement from the “experts.” Simply the fact there is a USAF Academy and AFROTC/OTS programs, as well as Professional Military Education (PME), suggests the Air Force believes leaders can be made—or at least improved. Today’s challenge, then, is to determine what lessons the Air Force should teach in its officer training and PME programs to prepare its officers to meet the leadership challenges of the future.

If change and uncertainty are “givens,” there must be some common thread for all leaders, independent of the “changes-du-jour,” that would serve as the foundation for officer education and training. In my opinion, that common thread is what is rooted inside the individual himself—in the individual’s character. According to the great football coach, Vince Lombardi, “Character, not education, is man’s greatest need and man’s greatest safeguard; for character is higher than intellect.”<sup>2</sup> It is character that stands the test of time and weathers the periods of change, complexity and uncertainty which always seem to be the order of the day. Karl von Clausewitz, arguably the greatest military thinker in history, strongly supports the importance of character in his writings

about military genius. During his discussions of the “fog of war,” Clausewitz emphasized the importance of leaders following an inner light leading to truth.<sup>3</sup> This is the essence of character at its very best. As the Air Force prepares for the “fog” of the next century, character will be the foundation to build a bright future upon.

While definitions of character are as numerous and varied as definitions of leadership, the best “short list” of principles I have found to describe character is a list the Air Force has already provided—the Air Force core values. “Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do” is a superb list of character traits because of its all-encompassing simplicity—unlike the six core values the Air Force initially developed several years ago. Although the previous list—courage, competency, service, patriotism, integrity and tenacity—was larger, it was overly specific and allowed for exclusions. The current list of three is general enough to enable the incorporation of all positive character traits. While duty, honor, and country have become the character battle cry for the Army, integrity, service, and excellence can serve a similar purpose for the Air Force.

Essentially, the Air Force core values should be a way of work and a way of life, as well as a yardstick for success and a criteria for effective decision making. In the vernacular of an aircrew member, the list of core values can be an officer’s “boldface” checklist for making correct decisions. A “boldface” checklist is a list of key steps for a pilot to follow in the event of an in-flight emergency. These steps are committed to memory and guide the pilot’s actions when the going gets rough. Basically, “boldface” is what you can fall back on during a difficult situation—when you need to take the right course of action. It is in this light the core values can be used as a “boldface” checklist to guide officers in their daily actions. For this reason, training and education on the basic

core values, with the resultant positive character development, is where the Air Force needs to focus its preparation of future officers.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Burt Nanus, "Doing the Right Thing," in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, reprinted from *The Bureaucrat*, ed. Richard I. Lester (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996) 315.

<sup>2</sup> Gen Bennie L. Davis, "Leadership," in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, ed. Richard I. Lester (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996) 313.

<sup>3</sup> Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101-108

## **Chapter 2**

### **A Crisis Of Character**

#### **Changing Social Climate**

The current social climate in the United States indicates the development of core values in future Air Force leaders may be a bigger challenge than ever before. I mentioned the recent disturbing incident at the USAF Academy; unfortunately, there have been other serious developments that have gained national attention. A 1993-94 survey conducted by the General Accounting Office revealed 78 percent of female USAF Academy cadets had suffered sexual harassment on a recurring basis. This result had climbed from 59 percent following a similar survey in 1990-91.<sup>1</sup> In addition, during the 1994 school year the Academy received reports of 15 sexual assaults or incidents of sexual misconduct ranging from rape to improper fondling.<sup>2</sup> After these incidents, Brig Gen Patrick Gamble, then the Commandant of Cadets, reflected on the caliber of individual entering the USAF Academy. “The raw material is not coming in the door with the same values our grandparents and parents taught us 30 and 35 years ago.”<sup>3</sup> Certainly, this trend is not limited to USAF Academy cadets but seems to be prevalent among all of the armed services.

The past year was not a good one for any of the services as scandals were all too prevalent. In November the Army was rocked by sexual abuse allegations at the Army Ordnance Center and School at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. A captain and two drill sergeants face charges that go beyond sexual harassment into sexual assault and rape. One of the accused allegedly even threatened to kill some of his victims. In addition, after the Army established a toll-free sexual abuse hot line at Aberdeen, over 3000 calls from all over the country poured in after the first week.<sup>4</sup>

The Navy was also not immune from the negative spotlight even while it continued to recover from the Tailhook incident of 1991. This past year the Naval Academy expelled fifteen of its midshipmen as the result of a drug and car theft ring.<sup>5</sup> This latest Naval Academy problem follows on the heels of a massive cheating scandal at Annapolis in 1994.<sup>6</sup>

Although all of these incidents received extensive media coverage throughout the year, it is wrong to assume this is solely a problem with the military. On the contrary, evidence indicates this negative pattern reflects the entire post-baby boom generation.

Individuals born between 1961 and 1981 make up the 13th generation of Americans and have come to be known by several names—"13ers," "Generation X," and the "Twenty-somethings." No matter what authors call them, they all seem to agree this generation may not be one of our finest. Dissatisfied, slackers, whiners, unskilled, cynical, and wild are just some of the words being used to describe this latest generation.<sup>7</sup>

Tales of violence and unethical behavior seem commonplace in America's schools today. If these stereotypes are true, we should be careful not to place all the blame on these "kids" who are now growing up. According to Charlie Meier, a graduate of the first

graduating class from the USAF Academy, “Today’s societal standards are different than the standards of 35 years ago. White collar crime is tolerated in society today. Our children learn from our behavior. They have different concepts of what is wrong.”<sup>8</sup> Jeff McFadden, an ex-Navy officer and Naval Academy graduate, agrees. “What we’re seeing today in the class of 2000 are the offspring and byproduct of what is probably the most self-centered, self-absorbed, hedonistic culture in American history.”<sup>9</sup> What society previously accepted as “givens” in the area of core values—and the difference between right and wrong—can not be assumed anymore.

### **Importance of Core Value Education**

If the core values and the character of our future Air Force leaders are suspect, how does the USAF develop these attributes? Can it teach core values to members who do not measure up to Air Force standards? I believe the answer is yes! John Gardner, a renowned scholar and author, emphatically denies the importance of an individual’s innate attributes. “The individual’s hereditary gifts, however notable, leave the issue of future leadership performance undecided, to be settled by later events and influences....”<sup>10</sup> People can learn the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior and modify their actions accordingly.

Certainly, if we carry this thought to an extreme, there are countless examples of criminals who have been rehabilitated and gone on to become respected members of society. Furthermore, in an address by Dr. Sheila Widnall to the USAF Academy cadet corps, she summed up the relationship of habitual behavior and character development by closing with the following quote from a YMCA leader:

Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny<sup>11</sup>

If habits do form an individual's character, it makes sense that correcting a flawed character would involve breaking a bad habit, not unlike quitting smoking cigarettes. The challenge is finding the right education and training program to break those "value habits" that counter effective leadership. The obvious and easiest way to stop a bad habit is by preventing it in the first place. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" applies to core value education and is more important than ever as the Air Force faces some significant challenges.

As the turn of the century draws near, the Air Force braces itself for a period of turmoil. Although the bulk of restructuring and downsizing is in the past, the USAF is still not at its end-strength numbers directed by the recent DOD Bottom-up Review. Over the next two years the Air Force will have to reduce its numbers by a total of 10,000 members. Not only will the force be smaller but many traditional military services will transition to the civilian work force. "Out-sourcing" and "privatization" have been gaining popularity as solutions to shrinking budgets and costly new weapon systems. The Air Force plans to use the savings to help pay for new aircraft and systems such as the Joint Strike Fighter, F-22, C-17, and the Milstar satellite system.<sup>12</sup>

While this is not the proper forum for a discussion of the pros and cons of outsourcing and privatization, the point is the future Air Force will look entirely different than it does today. Unlike military members, contractors do not have to take an oath to "support and defend the Constitution" and "to bear true faith and allegiance to the same."

A smaller, “less military” Air Force emphasizes once again the importance of a core foundation based on positive character values. I firmly believe this increased focus on core values will also be the solution to another problem the USAF is currently facing—the “accountability” issue.

Accountability—the word brings forth emotions among all USAF officers, young and old. Why is this now such an emotional topic? Accountability is really a straightforward issue that requires us to answer for our actions, and, if warranted, to receive punishment for those actions if they are inappropriate. What is so wrong about this? The problem seems to be that everybody is focusing on the wrong side of the issue. Focusing on accountability is like worrying about locking the barn after the horse has escaped. Put the focus where it should be—on integrity, service, and excellence. Reducing core value “violations” will decrease the need for these accountability cases, and this issue should die a long-overdue death. The current cerebral “feeding frenzy” about accountability is just one more reason why the Air Force’s foundation for the future rests with the three core values.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rick Maze, “Academy Incidents on the Rise?,” *Air Force Times*, 17 April 1995, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Genevieve Anton, “Nontraditional Women,” *Air Force Times*, 7 March 1994, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Genevieve Anton and Jeff Thomas, “A Question of Honor,” *Air Force Times*, 7 March 1994, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Jane McHugh and G.E. Wills, “Army Leaders Wonder What Went Wrong,” *Air Force Times*, 25 November 1996, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Fred Francis, “NBC News In-depth—Breaking Ranks,” *NBC Nightly News*, 8 November 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Brock, “The Extremes of Honor,” *Esquire*, October 1994, 114-120.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, “What’s Ahead,” in *Leadership in the 21st Century*, reprinted from *US News & World Report*, 22 February 1993, ed. Col Gail Arnott (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, August 1996) 225-226.

<sup>8</sup> Jeff Thomas, “Values: How They Changed,” *Air Force Times*, 7 March 1994, 13.



## Notes

<sup>9</sup> Francis.

<sup>10</sup> Maj Donald H. Horner, "Leader Development and Why It Remains Important," *Military Review*, July-August 1995, 77.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Sheila E. Widnall, "Watch Your Character—It Becomes Your Destiny," *Airman*, April 1994, 39.

<sup>12</sup> William Matthews, "Jobs on the Line," *Air Force Times*, 16 December 1996, 12-13.

## **Chapter 3**

### **A Core Value Foundation**

#### **Integrity**

The first core value necessary in the foundation of future Air Force leaders is integrity. There is virtually unanimous agreement among military leaders that this value is the bedrock of effective leadership. General Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, summarizes the importance of integrity in Air Force officers by pointing to the business we're in—the profession of arms. According to General Fogleman, “The US Air Force exists for one reason, and one reason alone. That is to fight and win America's wars when called on to do so. That's the only reason we exist as an institution.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, former Air Force Chief of Staff David C. Jones added additional emphasis to the role of integrity by saying, “Integrity is certainly not a unique military attribute, but stakes are higher in our business than in almost any other. We must be right, we must be competent, we must admit our mistakes and correct them when they do occur, and above all we must never permit either the fact or image of duplicity to taint our honor. The watchword must be, as always, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”<sup>2</sup>

Integrity does not just mean always telling the truth, although this is important. As General Fogleman and Dr. Widnall have written, “If you always tell the truth, you never

have to try and remember what you told someone.” The best definition I ever heard for integrity is also the most simple—doing what’s right when nobody is looking.<sup>3</sup> This definition covers a watershed of areas—as it should! Integrity involves keeping commitments, which in turn builds trust. When the commitment is to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, the importance of integrity becomes obvious. Pencil-whipping training records, violating technical data, falsifying documents and making inaccurate reports are all examples of integrity violations. According to General Fogleman, “We can ill afford such behavior in a business like ours that deals in lethal instruments and the lives of people.”<sup>4</sup>

Some recent Air Force disasters pointed to integrity flaws that resulted in significant loss of life to military and civilian personnel. In 1994 a B-52 crashed at Fairchild AFB during a practice airshow flyover, killing all onboard. The pilot in control of the aircraft had a history of violating aircraft technical data and performing unsafe flight maneuvers, which investigators revealed was the cause for this crash. Not only was the pilot’s integrity at fault, but also his commander’s as well. His commander, despite numerous warnings and complaints about this pilot’s inappropriate actions, allowed the pilot to continue flying when he should have been grounded. This multiple breakdown in integrity met with the most severe of consequences. Another example of an integrity fault having disastrous results occurred recently in the former Yugoslavia. A USAF CT-43 from Ramstein AFB, carrying Ron Brown, the US Secretary of Commerce, crashed while attempting an approach at Dubrovnik Airport in Croatia, killing all onboard. While the safety report (which was read live on CNN) identified numerous causes for the accident, the most disturbing factor was the Air Force unit’s disregard for Air Force

regulations. Had the aircrew complied with these regulations, they would have never attempted the approach into this airport. Integrity does go much deeper than simply telling the truth, and the penalties for integrity flaws can be fatal. This is why it is so important to drill this core value deep into the soul of Air Force leaders.

These two recent examples of integrity failures are relatively straightforward; this is not to say that maintaining integrity is always easy. Often, it involves making difficult decisions, illustrated all too painfully by a well-publicized case from the Vietnam War. General John D. Lavelle, Commander of the Seventh Air Force in Saigon from August 1971 to April 1972, faced a difficult dilemma and subsequently failed the integrity test. Restricted by rules of engagement placing his pilots' safety at risk, Lavelle elected to violate those rules under the guise of pilot protection. He was then found responsible for fostering a command environment allowing mis-reporting of the rule violations.<sup>5</sup>

While it is true Lavelle was between a "rock and a hard place," there were options that would have been more appropriate. In hindsight, Lavelle should have refused to fly until the obsolete rules of engagement were changed. The result was Lavelle lost his command and was forced to retire as a major general. And if Lavelle's decision was difficult, think about the sergeant who uncovered this incident by exposing the false reports coming out of Lavelle's unit! This young sergeant "did the right thing;" that is the message we need to get to our future Air Force leaders. Integrity, the most important core value, has to be the first brick in the foundation of Air Force leadership training.

## **Service Before Self**

The second core value, service before self, is another key attribute separating the Air Force officer from most other professions. While some people call integrity “the mother of all core values,” service before self may be the “father of all core values.” In fact, if you hold this core value dearly you should automatically have integrity...because service before self means you will “do what is right.” Service before self, simply stated, is selflessness.

General Duane H. Cassidy, former Commander in Chief of the Military Airlift Command, defines selflessness as “putting your own personal desires second to a higher cause or to other people.”<sup>6</sup> Cassidy believes Air Force people must be selfless because “we are in a life and death business—our success guarantees freedom for all Americans—our failure is unconscionable.”<sup>7</sup> Service before self is “the mission.” It’s a 24-hour-a-day occupation, generating a satisfaction for doing the most important job in the country—protecting its freedom and its way of life.

While movie stars and sport heroes earn millions of dollars but often lead turbulent, unhappy lives, the job satisfaction from serving one’s country is a priceless gem that lasts a lifetime. If the Air Force can instill this value into its future officers, a major step towards effective leadership will be assured. Unfortunately, this objective may result in an uphill battle as well.

The negative trend of values in today’s society does not favor a selfless attitude, an attribute which is so important in the military. In an NBC television report about problems at the service academies, Pentagon correspondent Fred Francis correctly captured the importance of selflessness by saying, “In the military where teamwork is

vital to the national interests, a selfish future officer is a formula for future military failure.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the same NBC segment Brigadier General Ruben A. Cubero, Dean of Faculty at the USAF Academy, said, “There is a philosophy of individualism now as opposed to teamwork and caring for the community.”<sup>9</sup> Many times this type of selfishness manifests itself in officers who are labeled “careerists”—those who will do whatever is required to succeed. While careerism is serious in itself, the results of selfishness can be much worse. It can lead to abuse of position, with officers employing their authority to satisfy their own personal interests. This violation of trust by officers can lead to even more serious offenses in the Air Force, including inappropriate sexual behavior.

Dr. Widnall correctly blames self-interest as the cause for sexual harassment by supervisors. She believes this type of incident “is not measured by the sexual character of it but because it is an abuse of power, a conflict of interest, a violation of trust.”<sup>10</sup> It is not hard to see the selfishness inherent in some of the sex-related incidents that became public during the past year. An A-10 pilot faced criminal charges for “conduct unbecoming an officer” stemming from alleged sexual advances against an enlisted woman in the bathroom of a charter aircraft. The aircraft was returning to the US from a deployment to Kuwait, where A-10 unit members had participated in an illegal drinking party the night before their departure, a further example of selfish behavior.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, selfish conduct, demonstrated by sexual impropriety, is not limited to junior Air Force officers. A general officer wing commander was found guilty of misconduct with a female subordinate. The commander, who was forced to retire as a

colonel, “twice embraced a female subordinate while unsuccessfully pursuing an intimate relationship with her.”<sup>12</sup>

Selfishness, as evidenced by inappropriate sexual behavior, is totally incompatible with military service. This type of selfish behavior violates the core value of service before self and destroys the foundation so critical to Air Force operations. Although examples of selfish behavior often make the headlines, it is reassuring to know there are also good examples of Air Force individuals who demonstrate the core value of service before self.

In October 1993, Technical Sergeant Tim Wilkinson, an Air Force pararescueman, demonstrated the core value of service before self during a firefight in Mogadishu, Somalia. While treating injured Army helicopter crew members, Wilkinson was injured in the face and arm by shrapnel. In spite of these injuries, he proceeded through enemy fire to attend to Army Rangers in need of help. He treated the soldiers, went back for supplies, then returned through enemy fire to finish his work. Wilkinson received the Air Force Cross for his heroic efforts in the line of duty.<sup>13</sup> Although very few Air Force personnel face the imminent danger TSgt Wilkinson faced in Somalia, this example clearly demonstrates the core value of service before self—an attribute important to all Air Force members.

## **Excellence**

The third Air Force core value, excellence, once again separates the Air Force officer from his or her peers. I consider it the “catch-all” core value, encompassing vision and competence and guiding an officer’s daily actions. Once again, excellence is a core value

that reflects the importance of this profession, that the nation entrusts its security with the leadership of its military officers. Vision is the ability to look forward and have a sense of direction for where an organization needs to go.<sup>14</sup> Although it may not be possible to increase an individual's capacity to have vision, there are ways to focus the direction an individual will take. Emphasizing the three Air Force core values is the right way to correctly focus that direction. "As the pace of change in our world continues to accelerate, strong basic values become increasingly necessary to guide leadership behavior."<sup>15</sup> Vision that is guided by core values will certainly serve the Air Force well as it meets the challenges of the next century. Vision without competence, however, will be like a train on the right track but without a qualified engineer at the wheel.

The other important part of excellence is competence. A leader must have the necessary qualifications to make decisions that could affect the lives of many. For a military officer, these qualifications often include the expertise gained from technical training and follow-on training at the operational unit. Professional military education at the appropriate time during one's career provides the additional Air Force knowledge facilitating correct decision making. Once we achieve competence, there must be a dedicated effort to maintain, or even improve, this level of competence through recurring training. Unfortunately, a lack of competence contributed to a tragic mistake leading to the friendly shootdown of two US Army Black Hawk helicopters and the death of 26 people.

The story of the military disaster over Northern Iraq in April, 1994 is all too well known. Two F-15s mistakenly identified two US helicopters in the no-fly zone as Iraqi aircraft and subsequently shot them down. As the investigation of this mishap revealed,



incompetence was evident at numerous levels. According to Secretary Widnall, “This mishap was not the result of any one individual’s actions. The conduct of numerous officers and the system itself contributed.”<sup>16</sup> First of all, the Air Force and the Army were operating with two different friend-or-foe identification codes required for all US aircraft entering Iraq. The air tasking order, a USAF product directing all US flights in the area, instructed the helicopters to set a wrong code, leading to the F-15 pilots’ suspicions they were not friendly. In addition, officers onboard an airborne warning and control aircraft responsible for monitoring all air traffic in the area, failed to intervene and prevent the incident. Finally, the two F-15 pilots incorrectly identified the Black Hawks as Iraqi Hind helicopters. Incompetence, as demonstrated in this terrible incident, cannot be tolerated in the profession of arms. If the Air Force can somehow instill in its officers the excellence that was so brilliantly demonstrated by General Curtis E. LeMay, incidents like the Black Hawk shootdown will never happen.

General Curtis E. LeMay will be remembered for many things—Air Force Chief of Staff, “Father” of the Strategic Air Command, architect of the fire-bombing campaign in Japan—but his example of excellence may be his most valuable legacy to the Air Force today. General LeMay had an incredible work ethic, and he would never tolerate incompetence. This dedication to excellence resulted in the Strategic Air Command becoming the most powerful military force ever assembled.

Although General LeMay was considered a tough commander, he never expected more from his people than he did from himself. As a young officer, he was considered the best pilot in his unit; he then attended navigator training and afterwards was considered the best navigator in the unit. But, his quest for excellence did not stop here.

General LeMay studied the B-17 aircraft systems and was considered to be one of the best B-17 crew chiefs—he was often seen out on the flightline training young maintainers!<sup>17</sup>

Although not everybody can be a Curt LeMay, his example of excellence can be a noble target for today's Air Force officers. Like integrity and service before self, the core value of excellence must be an integral part of each officer's foundation. The officer training schools and PME programs offer the best hope for incorporating these core values into the Air Force way of life. Considering the numerous recent examples of serious violations of Air Force standards, it may be beneficial to review the current core value training of these institutions.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, "Integrity," *Air Force Magazine*, February 1996, 90.

<sup>2</sup> Gen Duane H. Cassidy, "A Leadership Perspective," in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, ed. Richard I. Lester (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996) 378.

<sup>3</sup> Gen Ronald R. Fogleman and Sheila E. Widnall, "Core Values," in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, ed. Richard I. Lester (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996) 73.

<sup>4</sup> Fogleman, "Integrity," 91.

<sup>5</sup> Maj Lee E. DeRemer, "Leadership Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *Airpower Journal*, Fall 1996, 88-93.

<sup>6</sup> Cassidy, 378.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Francis.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Sheila E. Widnall, "Perspectives on Leadership," in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, ed. Richard I. Lester (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1996) 422.

<sup>11</sup> Julie Bird, "Pope Pilot Convicted of Conduct Violations," *Air Force Times*, 26 August 1996, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Bryant Jordan and William Matthews, "Retirement With Demotion is OK'd," *Air Force Times*, 6 January 1997, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Sheila Widnall, "Of Three Who Did the Right Thing," *Air Force Times*, 13 November 1995, 35.

## Notes

<sup>14</sup> James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, “Seven Lessons for Leading the Voyage to the Future,” in The Drucker Foundation et al., eds., *The Leader of the Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 103.

<sup>15</sup> Warren Wilhelm, “Learning From Past Leaders,” in the Drucker Foundation et al., eds., *The Leader of the Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 223.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Thompson, “So, Who’s to Blame?” *Time*, 3 July 1995, 27.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas M. Coffey, *Iron Eagle* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1986), 11-18.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Current Air Force Core Value Education**

#### **Officer Accession Programs**

For a review of core value awareness training at accession and PME schools, a good place to start is the USAF Academy. The USAF Academy has always had an honor code: “We will not lie, steal or cheat, nor tolerate anyone who does.” This code is fairly straightforward and covers four important aspects of integrity. Cadets have a grace period of six weeks during initial basic training where they learn the code and the penalty for violating it—expulsion from the Academy. Considering the evidence of the questionable values characteristic of cadets entering the Academy today, it is debatable whether six weeks is long enough to teach these important values to cadets. According to Brig Gen Gamble, “Their definition of cheating and ours is different because their value system is different. You can’t say ‘don’t lie, cheat, or steal,’ anymore. You’ve got to redefine for them what lying, cheating and stealing is all about.”<sup>1</sup> This atmosphere of doubt led to the USAF Academy’s development of a Center for Character Development, an initiative which should serve the USAF well for many years to come.

The Center for Character Development was established in 1993 to instill character into new cadets, with emphasis on core value development. The USAF Academy

organized this new agency into three divisions—Character and Ethics, Human Relations, and Honor Education. The impetus for the Center’s development was the environment of doubt surrounding the character of new cadets entering the Academy. According to Lt Col Terrence Moore, Ethics Director of the Center in 1994, “Blame white collar crime, broken families, MTV, whatever. But the result is we’re fighting trends of extreme individualism in the society as a whole. We’ve gotten away from a focus on those common values that people share. Things like integrity and selflessness, responsibility, decisiveness, honesty—basic core values that everybody agrees on.”<sup>2</sup>

The Center for Character Development has training programs to increase cadet knowledge of moral/ethical issues, honor, and human diversity. During basic training the Academy tasks new cadets to reflect on situations testing their commitment to core values. Scenarios include actual cases of cadets who have made decisions contrary to Air Force core values. I am certain this is an eye-opening experience for some individuals who realize from the start they are in a whole new ball game. In addition, during their four-year stay cadets receive a total of 43 lessons on the Academy honor code—as it applies to the Academy, officership, the Air Force, and service to country.<sup>3</sup>

History will be the judge of this new initiative at the Air Force Academy, but I think the Center for Character Development is right on track for the training of new Air Force leaders for the 21st century, particularly in the area of the most important core value, integrity. The Air Force Academy seems to understand the importance of enhanced core value education. The Air Force’s Reserve Officer Training Corps is also working toward this same goal.

The AFROTC program also includes core value training as part of its curriculum. First year cadets receive two hours of classroom time on officership and core values; second year cadets receive two more hours on ethics and values. Most of the core value-related training, however, comes in a cadet's third year. During their junior year the cadets receive a total of eight hours on ethics, core values/officership values, and character development. Finally, in their senior year, AFROTC cadets culminate their undergraduate education with a one-hour core values capstone session.<sup>4</sup> While the AFROTC program does not have an education asset that is comparable to the USAF Academy's Center for Character Development, it understandably offers more core value training than does the 13-week Officer Training School.

An abbreviated training program like OTS does not have the luxury of conducting in-depth lessons on any one subject. Nevertheless, OTS does manage to include core value training in its curriculum. During their first week, OTS students receive a session on core values from the OTS commander. The commander defines core values and then lectures on their importance to Air Force operations. Later in the program a chaplain talks to the students about ethics and the difference between right and wrong. For many of the OTS students who are former Air Force enlisted personnel, these sessions serve as a review since they are already familiar with these values from prior experience. To further integrate core value awareness, OTS faculty members have also used the school's leadership reaction course to emphasize proper character values to the students.<sup>5</sup> It is evident, then, that like the USAF Academy and AFROTC, OTS does address core values in its program, as do the officer PME schools.

## **Professional Military Education**

At Squadron Officer School (SOS) company grade officers receive core value awareness primarily through the study of the Black Hawk shootdown and the crash of the Fairchild B-52. There are also additional core value-related readings as part of the “officership” phase of the curriculum. Furthermore, during the students’ participation in a leadership exercise known as “Project X,” faculty members take advantage of the opportunity to highlight good and bad examples of core values—as demonstrated by the students themselves.<sup>6</sup> SOS is an important part of a young officer’s professional development, and core values awareness is included in the agenda, as it is for the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC).

For most field grade officers, ACSC is the professional military education they receive prior to assuming command of an Air Force squadron. Arguably, squadron commanders have more impact on the core value climate of the Air Force than any other officer, as he or she is still accessible to most ranks on a day to day basis. For this reason, ACSC offers a three-week block of instruction entitled “Leadership and Command” that includes five primary lessons covering ethics and morality. ACSC students also evaluate case studies, including the Fairchild B-52 crash and the Black Hawk shootdown, to further increase their understanding of the importance of core values.<sup>7</sup> For future squadron commanders, this curriculum offers some valuable guidance on the standards expected from Air Force leaders.

If core value education is important at the field grade rank level, it may be even more so at the senior rank level. In the Air Force, part of that responsibility rests with the Air War College. When one looks at the crashes of the Fairchild B-52 and the Ramstein CT-

43, it is painfully obvious there were leadership failures at the most senior levels—including operations group and wing commander positions. It is the Air War College (AWC) program that provides the last PME to officers before they assume these senior leadership positions in the Air Force. Although by this juncture in an officer's career, one would hope the core values would be deeply ingrained, the AWC still addresses core value issues in its curriculum. As part of the school's Leadership and Ethics agenda, AWC students discuss core values during case studies of the Lavelle incident, the Black Hawk shootdown, and the Fairchild B-52 crash. The Leadership and Ethics syllabus is spread out throughout the year so students are periodically reinforced about the importance of core values in the Air Force. The Air War College, as well as SOS and ACSC, do address core values as a normal part of their curriculum; apparently, this effort has not been enough

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Maj Brian F. Hall and Col David A. Wagie, "The US Air Force Academy's Cutting-Edge Character Development Program," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1996, 35-39.

<sup>4</sup> AY 96-97 AFROTC Curriculum Content, Lt Col Mykel D. Gable, Education Branch, Headquarters AFROTC, 10 January 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Capt Jason Walls, OTS Leadership Studies Curriculum, personal interview with author, 8 January 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Maj Sharon Latour, SOS Officership Curriculum, personal interview with author, 8 January 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Maj Jerry Szpila, ACSC Leadership and Command Curriculum, personal interview with author, 23 January 1997.



## **Chapter 5**

### **New Air Force Core Value Initiatives**

With core values being a part of all officer training programs and all PME curriculum, current character problems in the Air Force suggest the plans have not been adequate. It was in the perceived environment of declining character values—so painfully apparent in the highly publicized, sensational cases mentioned earlier—that General Fogleman directed a plan to strengthen core value education throughout the Air Force. General Fogleman released this plan in November as part of a 26-page document titled “Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force.” While the Air Force has already been teaching core values at the officer training schools and at PME, the new initiative goes much further at the unit level.

Commanders at all levels will now be directly involved in not only setting the example but also teaching lessons as part of a recurring core value education program. The new program requires commanders to give a lesson on core values to their subordinate commanders by June. To standardize the lesson Air Force-wide, commanders will be provided lesson material as well as case studies for discussion. The intent of this initiative is for commanders to “make our core values an operational reality within their unit.”<sup>1</sup> This “top-down” approach is just one of the initiatives General Fogleman has directed to make core values a way of life in the Air Force.

## **The “Little Blue Book**

Part of the “re-valuing” of the Air Force involves the distribution of the “little blue book” to all Air Force members. This book, which was printed on 1 January, is a 25-page pamphlet designed to serve as a core values guide for the Air Force “family.” The first section of the book outlines the basic definitions of the core values and how they apply in the workplace. The second section addresses why core values are important to the Air Force and how a “climate of ethical corrosion” has led to incidents like the crashes of the Fairchild B-52 and the Ramstein CT-43. Finally, the “little blue book” outlines a core values strategy that will hopefully fix the corrosive ethical climate in today’s Air Force. Essential to this strategy is what the blue book calls “the core values continuum.”

## **Core Values Continuum**

The core values continuum emphasizes the need for the Air Force to not only teach core values, but equally important, to live them. Core values education will begin at the officer training schools and will be continuously reemphasized throughout an officer’s career at PME schools, during training, and in the unit. Anyone who is responsible for education and training will be expected to conduct a “schoolhouse weave” to further integrate core values into the curriculum. This means core values will be woven into existing courses by (1) creating a short introductory lesson dedicated to explaining core values, (2) building planned opportunities into the course to discuss core values in the context of the subject being taught, and (3) taking advantage of unexpected opportunities that arise in a course of instruction to emphasize core values. In addition to beefing up

core values education at the schoolhouses, the core values continuum also directs the “operationalizing” of core values.<sup>2</sup>

The added emphasis of core values at the operational unit level includes not only a “top-down approach” as previously mentioned, but also a “bottom-up approach.” While commanders and other leaders are conducting core value lessons and setting the right example, all members of the organization should be examining the unit’s moral health. This critical look has been labeled a “corrosion analysis” with the goal of surfacing problem areas to the unit leadership. The bottom line regarding the core values continuum is that everybody in the Air Force is responsible for making core values a way of life.<sup>3</sup>

### **Air and Space Basic Course**

Another initiative by General Fogleman to totally integrate core values throughout an officer’s career involves the addition of two PME courses—The Air and Space Basic Course and the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program. Both courses are in the developmental stages, and although both schools will address a variety of professional issues, initial curriculum plans show core values will be key parts of the syllabi. The intent of the Air and Space Basic Course is to get officers to think of themselves first as Air Force officers and second as specialists in their fields. Officers would attend this course directly after receiving their commission. Although the location for this course has not been selected yet, it will definitely be a resident PME school.<sup>4</sup> The Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program, on the other hand, will be an in-unit PME course.

## **Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program**

The draft curriculum plan for the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program identifies a two-phase approach that will be mandatory for all officers before they attend SOS. Phase 1 will be the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Course (CGOPDC) and Phase 2 will be the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Group and Independent Study. It is in Phase 1, the CGOPDC, where officers will receive added exposure to core values and their role in the Air Force.

The mission of the CGOPDC will be “to improve and broaden the professional competence of company grade officers so they may better perform their duties in support of Air Force Global Engagement and associated mission requirements.”<sup>5</sup> The course is designed to expand on knowledge gained in officer training programs and completion of the Air and Space Basic Course. The unit commander will be responsible for this new school and will appoint a base course director to oversee the program. Instructors will be senior captains and majors from the unit who will accomplish this as an additional duty. During the leadership phase of the CGOPDC, these unit instructors will again address core value definitions and importance while also leading case studies on relevant core value issues. Dr Richard I. Lester, from the Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development, is responsible for developing this new program and believes the core values part of the curriculum is critical to enhanced officer training. “Values build character,” Lester said, and “this new initiative will go a long way to further core values education among Air Force officers.”<sup>6</sup> The Company Grade Officers Professional

Development Program should prove to be a major step in improving the integration of positive character values at the unit level.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Julie Bird, "The Chief's Vision," *Air Force Times*, 2 December 1996, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Chief of Staff, "The Little Blue Book," draft document to Air Force personnel, subject: United States Air Force Core Values, 1 January 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Bird, "The Chief's Vision," 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development, draft curriculum plan, subject: Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program, December 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Richard I. Lester, Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development, personal interview with author, 9 January 1997.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Center For Core Value Development: A Need For The Future**

With all of these new Air Force initiatives addressing core values and their importance, the problem is solved, right? Not necessarily. Although these enthusiastic efforts are positive steps in developing character within the officer corps, the Air Force still has a long way to go to make core values a universally understood requirement for membership in its ranks. A “knee-jerk” reaction to a problem, no matter how noble, resulting in a flood of information from all directions, is bound to generate negative feelings around the Air Force. General Billy Boles, commander of the Air Education and Training Command, believes it is important that Air Force people do not view this initiative as just another program. Regarding the new plan that emphasizes core values, Boles says, “The idea is to make it more of a way of life than it is a program. People tend to be skeptical of programs.”<sup>1</sup>

A good example of this skepticism is the ongoing effort to make Quality an integral part of Air Force business. Despite the obvious benefits of a quality-based approach, many Air Force personnel still are not “onboard the quality bandwagon.” I firmly believe this is due to the Air Force not doing a good job of selling the quality program. Air Force units were deluged with reams of quality information, but there was no coordinated effort from the top to implement the program. Nor were there enough Air Force personnel

adequately educated to implement quality at the unit levels. It is important the Air Force does not make this same mistake with the new core values initiative.

The new core values awareness plan needs to be directed from a central Air Force office responsible for core values education at all levels of an officer's career. This office should direct core value curriculums for all officer training programs, all PME courses, and all in-unit initiatives. As the program exists right now, there is no one looking at all core values training to ensure key issues are covered at the right stage of an officer's career and there is no unnecessary repetition in the process.

The developers of the Air and Space Basic Course and the CGOPDC have not been given detailed guidance on what their core values syllabus will include. With a lack of direction, the developers are considering covering core value definitions and incidents such as the Fairchild B-52 and Ramstein CT-43 crashes. These are lesson plan items that are already included in traditional PME programs. Although there is something to be said for repetitious training, the more likely result will be a decrease in effectiveness. To avoid implementing a disjointed Air Force-wide core values program, a central office for planning and execution of core values education would provide "cradle to grave" management of core value training. Normally, selecting an office to be responsible for directing an Air Force core values plan would be difficult. However, a recent new Air Force organizational change may have provided the obvious answer to this problem.

In January, Brigadier General (Major General-select) Ronald E. Keys was chosen to command the new headquarters of the Air Force Doctrine Center at Maxwell AFB. In this position, Brig Gen Keys will report directly to the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Fogleman. In his new position, Keys will be responsible for leading an organization

tasked with researching, developing, and writing doctrinal literature for the entire Air Force. According to Keys, “Doctrine is the guiding principle of an entire organization—it is what is important.”<sup>2</sup> This level of importance is exactly where core values belong. Core values should be as much a part of Air Force doctrine as is air superiority and strategic bombing. This doctrine center should establish an office—a Center for Core Value Development, or CCVD—to take the lead in building an Air Force core values architecture directing an integrated, well coordinated training and awareness program across the spectrum of the Air Force. Specifically, the core values architecture should include the proper subjects to be covered in officer training schools, at PME, and in the operational unit. With a single, central office in charge of core values education for the Air Force, there are a number of suggestions this office should consider to improve core values awareness across the Air Force.

In the area of officer training programs, I believe the USAF Academy’s Center for Character Development is a “state of the art” initiative offering the best hope for positive character development. The CCVD should look at the USAF Academy program as a benchmark to enhance core value training in all of the officer accession programs. Currently, there is no regular system of review—no sharing of lessons learned—between the Academy’s character development center and either AFROTC or OTS.<sup>3</sup> This is a missed opportunity for the Air Force to benefit from dialogue between the three programs. An annual review of lessons learned should prove valuable as faculty members could incorporate the good ideas into all three curricula. Standardizing core values education to the maximum extent possible should be the goal of the new CCVD



office. This is particularly important in the area of the most important core value, integrity.

Although it is commonly advertised that the USAF Academy has an honor code, few people realize that AFROTC and OTS also have honor codes. While the honor codes are virtually the same across the board—"We will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do"—the three programs do not enforce this code the same way. The Air Force Academy uses an honor probation system to "rehabilitate" some violators of the code. According to Lt Col Mick Fekula, of the Academy's Character Development and Ethics Division, most probation cases involve younger, inexperienced cadets, but more senior cadets can also be eligible for rehabilitation.<sup>4</sup> OTS students, on the other hand, do not have a probation option; they will be disenrolled if found guilty of honor code violations.<sup>5</sup> In the case of AFROTC, administration of the honor code lies somewhere between the rigid enforcement of OTS and the rehabilitation option of the Academy. While AFROTC students are to comply with the same honor code, the administration of violations is left at the unit level.<sup>6</sup> This delegation of responsibility to each unit could result in wide interpretation—and enforcement—of honor code violations.

If all graduates of the three officer training programs are going to be officers in the Air Force, why aren't some of the key standards the same? Despite necessary differences in the three curricula due to course length, student maturity, and cost, there are still some areas ripe for standardization. The first task of the CCVD should be to standardize the honor code policy among all three of the officer accession programs. All three schools' students should be given a grace period until they fully understand the importance of the core value of integrity. The use of a probation option during this time, along the lines of

the Academy's, should be considered as a useful education tool. Once the students pass the grace period, the penalty for integrity violations should be expulsion. This is a stiff penalty, but aspiring Air Force officers need to understand early in their careers the importance of honor. Integrity has to be the first agenda item for all officer training programs, followed closely by service before self.

To best instill the service core value into future officers, the Air Force needs to advertise—and emphasize—its mission and vision from “day-one.” The words, “To defend the United States through control and exploitation of space,” and “Building the world’s most respected air and space force” are powerful; they should set the proper stage for a rigorous training program. This program should then include extensive study of successful leaders in military history and the sacrifices they made in the service of their country. The list of possible subjects is lengthy—Mitchell, Eisenhower, MacArthur, LeMay, Sijan—but the theme would be the same. The attribute of service before self should be emphasized so officer candidates understand the essence of their profession and the sacrifice required.

The USAF Academy does provide military history courses to its cadets, but primarily to those who declare military history as a major—normally a very small percentage of the cadet corps. The Academy needs to robust the curriculum so all cadet year-groups receive courses on key military leaders in history. “Stories of events and personalities in the history of the Air Force that exemplify core values validate their importance to the organization. They also serve to inspire those who hear them to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, no matter what a cadet’s major, he or she should receive enough courses in military history to be awarded a minor in military history. This

is the business of the Academy—military leadership—and its officer training programs should reflect that. As General Fogleman so aptly stated, “The Air Force Academy does not exist to provide a first-class education to some of the brightest young men and women in America. It exists to produce leaders of our Air Force.”<sup>8</sup> In the case of the AFROTC program, while the cadets receive eight hours of study on Air Force leaders and heritage, this is not enough to cover a 50-year history of service before self. AFROTC cadets need to receive additional military history training highlighting examples of officers who have demonstrated the highest of standards. An extensive education in military history and the Air Force mission/vision will ensure our future leaders understand the core value of service before self. Service before self is so critical to future successful Air Force operations, but this core value will mean nothing without the excellence that must accompany it.

While it is true the USAF Academy has developed an outstanding reputation for academic excellence, it is more important for this institution to be recognized for excellence in military leadership. The USAF Academy offers majors in 23 areas of study—from aeronautical engineering to economics to management. Despite the fact the reason the USAF Academy exists is to produce military leaders, there is no major in military leadership. Why doesn’t the Academy offer a major in leadership? Why isn’t there even a separate academic leadership department?<sup>9</sup> I previously mentioned the need for additional military history study at the Academy and at AFROTC, but there are also outstanding literary works on the essence of effective leadership. The study of works by Stephen R. Covey, Peter F. Drucker, and Max De Pree, to name just a few, would be invaluable in preparing our future leaders. According to Covey, “Those people and

organizations who have a passion for learning—learning through listening, seeing emerging trends, sensing and anticipating needs in the marketplace, evaluating past successes and mistakes, and absorbing the lessons that conscience and principles teach us, to mention just a few ways—will have enduring influence. Such learning leaders will not resist change; they will embrace it.”<sup>10</sup> Learning about leadership is where excellence will manifest itself because leadership education is a career investment—unlike education in other areas.

While it is valuable to have some Academy cadets majoring in special fields of study, this option should be reserved for a select few who will actually use this degree in the Air Force. Most of the academic knowledge gained at the Academy is never used, as cadets proceed on to pilot training or other fields where a majority of their under-graduate knowledge becomes lost. Leadership study, on the other hand, will be valuable for all USAF Academy graduates, no matter what field they enter after graduation. Majoring in leadership at the Academy should be the norm; this would be a superb way to instill the core value of excellence into future military leaders. The CCVD should look at this option for the USAF Academy and evaluate its feasibility at AFROTC units as well. In addition, there are other suggestions the CCVD should consider to increase the effectiveness of Air Force core value education.

There are a number of valuable core value lessons I have already addressed that should be a part of all three officer training programs. The CCVD should ensure case studies covering the Lavelle incident, the Black Hawk shootdown, and crashes of the Fairchild B-52 and Ramstein CT-43, are a part of all officer training curriculum. These are classic examples of core value violations that clearly demonstrate the impact—and the

lethality—of not doing what is right. In addition, the new core value center could evaluate classic civilian and cadet cases, as well as “issues of the day,” and add them to the three syllabi. This standardization will put all new officers on common ground in regards to “big ticket” core value failures.

This is not to say emphasizing the negative should be the only approach. Officer trainees should also study cases of positive core value examples—like the case of General Curt LeMay. The main point is that the Air Force should evaluate the main lessons it is teaching all of its officer candidates, decide what is best, then implement these lessons in all programs. With the CCVD directing the best possible core values education at all three officer training schools, core values will become ingrained in future Air Force officers.

After the officer accession programs, professional military education offers the next prime opportunity to emphasize core values as the foundation for officer decisions and actions. This is particularly true as the Air Force continues to downsize. According to General Fogleman, “...history clearly shows us that when you get smaller, PME becomes more important rather than less important.”<sup>11</sup> Although all current and projected PME programs address core values in their curricula, they appear to be a minor part of the syllabi. If the Air Force is serious about elevating core values to a foundation level, then PME should reflect this effort.

As previously discussed, the Air Force now offers three different PME schools and proposes two more, with the recent addition of The Air and Space Basic Course and the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program. For all five courses, the CCVD should oversee the core values curriculum to present the right education at the

right stage of an officer's career. The CCVD could also promote phased development and prevent unnecessary repetition between the PME programs and the officer training schools. This effort would be a "building block" approach to core value education during an officer's entire career. For instance, if all officer trainees are already familiar with the "classic" core value cases, such as Lavelle and the Black Hawk shootdown, there is no need to cover them in depth in the Air and Space Basic Course. For the remainder of the in-residence courses—SOS, ACSC, and AWC—the classics should be reviewed only enough to address the preferred behavior at the captain, squadron commander, group/wing commander, and strategic levels, respectively. Since the Company Grade Officers Professional Development Program is a precursor to SOS, core value discussions in this wing-executed course should be restricted to specific cases from each unit, again to avoid repetition. These are just a few examples of how the CCVD could help direct Air Force core values education across the spectrum of officer PME programs. An office like this, that serves as a central authority for all officer core value education, would be a major step in insuring core value practice and in elevating core value importance.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bird, "The Chief's Vision," 14.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Mastin, Jr., "New Center Officer Answers to Pentagon," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 18 January 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Lt Col Mick Fekula, USAFA Character Development and Ethics Division, telephone interview with author, 10 January 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Walls.

<sup>6</sup> Lt Col Mykel D. Gable, Education Branch, Headquarters AFROTC, personal interview with author, 10 January 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Lt Col Alexander B. Roberts, "Core Values in a Quality Air Force," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1994, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Fogleman, "Integrity," 90.

## Notes

<sup>9</sup> At the USAF Academy, Leadership Studies are combined with Behavioral Science education.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen R. Covey, "Three Roles of the Leader in the New Paradigm," in the Drucker Foundation et al., eds., *The Leader of the Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996) 150.

<sup>11</sup> Al Rod, "CSAF Discusses Downsizing, Tricare, PME," *Maxwell-GunterDispatch*, 16 August 1996.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions**

Core values are the key to preparing tomorrow's leaders to handle the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Certainly there will be complexity, uncertainty and change facing these new commanders, but this is nothing new. The key to effective leadership tomorrow is the same as it was yesterday—character. While Air Force officer training programs and PME programs address core values in their curriculum, there is still room for improvement. This is particularly true considering the uncertainty of the values held dear by today's youth. General Fogleman's new initiative to better instill core values into Air Force members is definitely a step in the right direction, but the Air Force needs to smartly integrate core values education and awareness into the life cycle of its officers. An Air Force Center for Core Value Development would be extremely valuable in directing this effort, outlining the right education and training at all officer training and PME schools. This core values "surge" is critical for future Air Force success because the core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence will always be in vogue and offer the best hope for outstanding leadership in any century. As General John Wickham, Jr., USA (Ret.) so ably stated, "The better the values and character, the more effective the leadership in any organization—military or civilian. But values come first. They are the bedrock for a character of excellence."<sup>1</sup>



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gen John A. Wickham, “The Role of Values in Organizations,” *Signal*, August 1988, 20.

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